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Exhibit 56



Libraries

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Internet Archive founder turns to new information storage device – the book

Agencies

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Tucked away in a small warehouse on a dead-end street, an internet pioneer is building a bunker to protect an endangered species: the printed word.

Brewster Kahle, 50, founded the non-profit [Internet Archive](#) in 1996 to save a copy of every webpage ever posted. Now the [MIT](#)-trained computer scientist and entrepreneur is expanding his effort to safeguard and share knowledge by trying to preserve a physical copy of every book ever published.

"There is always going to be a role for books," said Kahle, as he perched on the edge of a shipping container soon to be tricked out as a climate-controlled storage unit. Each container can hold about 40,000 volumes, the size of a branch library. "We want to see books live forever."

So far, Kahle has gathered about 500,000 books. He thinks the warehouse itself is large enough to hold about a million titles, with each one given a barcode that identifies the cardboard box, pallet and shipping container in which it resides.

That's far fewer than the nearly 130 million different books engineers involved in the [Google book project](#) estimate to exist worldwide. But Kahle says the ease with which they've acquired the first half-million donated texts makes him optimistic about reaching what he sees as a realistic goal of 10 million books - the equivalent of a major university library.

"The idea is to be able to collect one copy of every book ever published. We're not going to get there, but that's our goal," he said.

Recently, workers in offices above the warehouse floor unpacked boxes of books and entered information on each title into a database. The books ranged from [Moby Dick](#) and [The Hunchback of Notre-Dame](#) to [The Complete Basic Book of Home Decorating](#) and [Costa Rica for Dummies](#).

At this early stage in the book-collection process, specific titles aren't being sought so much as large collections. Duplicate copies of books already in the archive are redonated elsewhere. If someone does need to see an actual physical copy of a book, Kahle said it should take no more than an hour to fetch it.

"The dedicated idea is to have the physical safety for these physical materials for the long haul, and then have the digital versions accessible to the world," Kahle said.

Along with keeping books cool and dry, which Kahle plans to accomplish using the modified shipping containers, book preservation experts say he'll have to contend with vermin and about a century's worth of books printed on wood pulp paper that decays over time because of its own acidity.

Peter Hanff, acting director of the [Bancroft Library](#), the special collections and rare books archive at the University of California, Berkeley, says that just keeping the books on the west coast of the US will save them from the climate fluctuations that are the norm in other parts of the country.

He praises digitisation as a way to make books, manuscripts and other material more accessible. But he too believes that the digital does not render the physical object obsolete. He said people feel an "intimate connection" with artefacts - a letter written by [Albert Einstein](#) or a piece of papyrus dating back millennia.

"Some people respond to that with just a strong emotional feeling," Hanff said. "You are suddenly connected to something that is really old and takes you back in time."

Kahle said he simply had a strong reaction to the idea of books being thrown away.

"Knowledge lives in lots of different forms over time," he said. "First it was in people's memories, then it was in manuscripts, then printed books, then microfilm, CD-ROMS, now on the digital internet. Each one of these generations is very important."

Each new format as it emerges tends to be hailed as the end-all way to package information. But Kahle points out that even digital books have a physical home on a hard drive somewhere. He sees saving the physical artefacts of information storage as a way to hedge against the uncertainty of the future. (Alongside the books, Kahle plans to store the [Internet Archive](#)'s old servers, which were replaced late last year.)

Kahle envisions the book archive as less like another [Library of Congress](#) (which holds 33 million books, according to the library's website) and more like the [Svalbard Global Seed Vault](#), an underground Arctic cavern built to shelter backup copies of the world's food-crop seeds. The books are not meant to be loaned out on a regular basis, but are protected as authoritative reference copies if the digital version somehow disappears or a question ever arises about an [ebook](#)'s faithfulness to the original printed edition.

"The thing that I'm worried about is that people will think this is disrespectful to books. They think we're just burying them all in the basement," Kahle said. But he says it's his commitment to the survival of books that drives this project. "These are the objects that are getting to live another day."

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ohsocynical 1 Aug 2011 6:59

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That'll take a while!

Mute Report



SamanthaJWright 1 Aug 2011 7:08

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People can predict what the future holds but no one can say with any certainty what awaits mankind in the future. Perhaps we may be indebted at some point to people like Brewster Kahle and the people behind the Svalbard Global Seed Vault, who knows.

Internet Archive's founder turns to new information-storage device - The Book Libraries - The Guardian

But in the meantime any project which engenders respect for printed books and encourages the continuation of the printing industry in an increasingly digital age is to be commended.

Mute Report

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